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Tracking the CIA

Acting on INPOLSE, Your Intrepid Reporters Stalk the CIA and Hit Paydirt

The stately, four-story Washington town house bore absolutely no external markings to identify it as the home of International Police Services, Inc., a company that we had been investigating on a tip that it was a CIA proprietary—or secretly owned front company. Large shutters blocked the view through the windows. There was no mailbox. The building looked like a funeral home in hiding, mum and withdrawn.

There was a surprising bustle of activity outside the back entrance, however, as workers of all kinds—plumbers, carpenters, electricians, painters—ambled in and out of the building. Movers had emptied the place the day before, they said, taking truckloads of equipment to an unknown destination, and the repairmen were now cleaning up for the next occupants. The telephone had been disconnected, with no forwarding number. International Police Services (INPOLSE) had vanished at the moment we had found it.

Inside the vacant building, there were remnants of what looked to have been a specialized school. Three of the rooms were stripped laboratories, with formica tabletops around the preimeter and sinks with arching faucets. One lab had a formica display table in the middle, and another was built around a long, shallow basin of stainless steel, which we guessed had been used for developing film.

In addition to the labs, there were several offices and about half a dozen large classrooms, complete with blackboards, world maps, and wall signs preaching school discipline: CLEAN BLACKBOARD AND CHALK TRAY AFTER CLASS. One classroom was lined with wall sockets, wiring along the floor, and other evidence that it had once been an audio room with earphones at each desk. Someone had left magazines on a table —copies of *Police Chief, The Shooting Industry, American Firearms Industry,* and the *International Police Academy Review*. A Code of Professional Conduct, written in French, was posted in one hall. It was a kind of pledge of allegiance for police officers. Other signs were in Spanish.

The secret schoolhouse was bare except for file folders strewn about on the first floor. The folders had been emptied, but they were still labelled and the labels proved to be the only clues. Ten folders were marked "SURVEILLANCE—INTERVIEWS". About 50 others carried the names of companies around the country, presumably firms with which INPOLSE did business. Finally, six folders were marked with the names of individuals, who turned out to have been instructors at the school.

The corporations and the instructors, plus independent sources, provided us with hard evidence that International Police Services, Inc., operated for nearly 23 years as an arm of the CIA, under cover as a private firm. Part of its business was to export police wares to foreign police forces—guns, ammunition, nightsticks, handcuffs, holsters, uniforms, radios, and relatively unsophisticated kinds of bugging and surveillance equipment. But, according to INPOLSE officials, this export work was only a sideline to the larger task of education. Over the years, INPOLSE provided specialized training in police techniques to thousands of foreign policemen from 87 coun-

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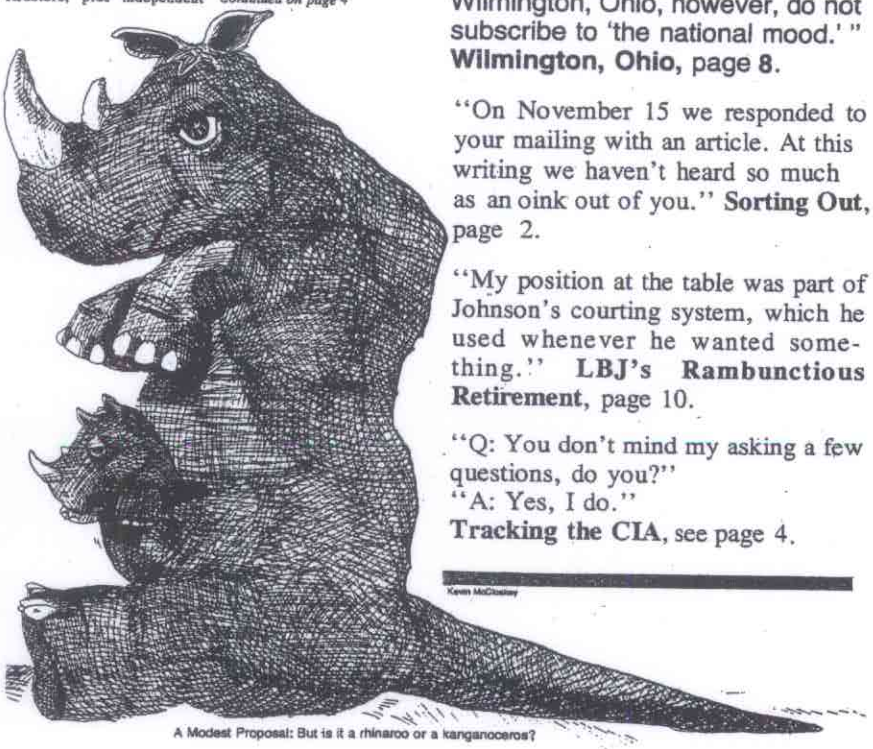

Kevin McCloskey

A Modest Proposal: But is it a rhinaroo or a kanganoceros?

"Readers who believe, as we do, that a woman has the right and need to pursue her work as totally as a man does will see that such a woman may have to face the prospect of living apart from her family." **A Long-Distance Marriage**, page 6.

"When the television reporters say 'the national mood' it is as though they are talking about a large, rough beast loose in a park where children are playing. The people of Wilmington, Ohio, however, do not subscribe to 'the national mood.'" **Wilmington, Ohio,** page **8.**

"On November 15 we responded to your mailing with an article. At this writing we haven't heard so much as an oink out of you." **Sorting Out**, page 2.

"My position at the table was part of Johnson's courting system, which he used whenever he wanted something." **LBJ's Rambunctious Retirement**, page 10.

"Q: You don't mind my asking a few questions, do you?"
"A: Yes, I do."
Tracking the CIA, see page 4.

Tracking the CIA

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tries around the world.

Philip Agee, a renegade ex-CIA operative nine years' experience in Latin America, described how, in 1965, he sent one of the Agency's Uruguayan agents, Alejandro Otero, to INPOLSE for training. Otero was then chief of intelligence for the Montevideo, Uruguay, police department. In an interview in London, Agee said that the special courses in Washington were designed "to jack up" Otero and "get him going against the Tumpamaros," the strongest group of Uruguayan revolutionaries at one time.

INPOLSE vanished from this Washington townhouse, 10 blocks from the White House.

Agee's story begs comparison to the explosive film, "State of Siege," in which the Tumpamaros kill an American official of the AID Public Safety program, in the belief that the program is merely a front for CIA interference in Uruguay. The State Department, reacting to publicity around the film, has vehemently and consistently denied that the Public Safety programs have been used or controlled by the CIA.

Agee's real-life CIA experience indicates otherwise. He told us that AID's own International Police Academy, a school very similar to INPOLSE that is run out of an old trolley barn in Georgetown, was originally established by the CIA. He went on to say that CIA operatives regularly used the AID Public Safety programs for cover in Uruguay and elsewhere, and that the Agency took advantage of AID's contact with foreign police forces to recruit its agents from among the local cops. Agee recounted how his request to have Otero trained was forwarded to James Angleton's counterintelligence staff at CIA headquarters, and how Otero was assigned to 12 weeks at the International Police Academy followed by four weeks at the CIA's "private" school, INPOLSE.

Angleton is the same senior CIA official who resigned last month in the wake of disclosures that his office had been involved in large-scale domestic operations—seemingly in violation of the CIA's charter. Agee stated—and three other CIA sources confirmed—that Angleton's counterintelligence office also controlled the CIA's worldwide police liaison, infiltration, and training programs. We have learned that the actual CIA operation that funneled people like Otero into training assignments was known by the acronym DTBAIL, and that a former Angleton staffer named Byron Engle moved from the CIA in 1962 to head the entire Office of Public Safety in AID.

"State of Siege," was banned from Washington's Kennedy Center two years ago because of its political overtones. The movie also provoked a heated debate in Congress over AID's police training programs. Most of the inquiry focused on AID's International Police Academy, which has now been legislated almost out of existence.

But none of the Congressional hearings or probes disclosed the operations of INPOLSE, even though it was older and at least as large as the Police Academy. Commercial cover worked so well for INPOLSE that it conducted classes, undetected, for 14 years at the old brownstone in the heart of Washington—10 blocks north of the White House, six blocks east of Embassy Row on Massachusetts Avenue, only a couple of blocks from the homes of all three *Harper's Weekly* Washington editors. (In 1960, INPOLSE, or the CIA, paid more than $100,000 in cash for the building.)

The school served as a parallel institution for the Police Academy, and several instructors referred to it as a kind of "graduate school" for IPA. Philip Agee said INPOLSE was used to conceal CIA training experts whom "you didn't want kicking around the Police Academy." One high CIA official, who retired two years ago from Agency headquarters here, observed that INPOLSE "performed services that IPA was not capable of performing."

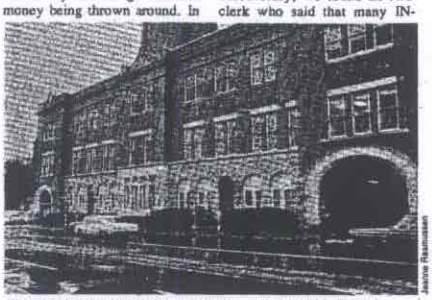
We took the names of the corporations from the discarded file folders and showed them to people knowledgeable in the traffic of firearms and bugging devices in Washington's underworld. These people recognized some of the firms, many of them run out of post office boxes in obscure cities, as dealers in police hardware and low-quality surveillance equipment. After examining our list, the State Department's Office of Munitions Control acknowledged that INPOLSE is registered as an exporter of munitions and other material requiring special government approval.

The State Department pondered our request for information about specific licenses—showing how much the company had exported, and to whom—for more than a month, without conclusion. We then filed an official request under the Freedom of Information Act, which by law requires a response within 10 days. The State Department has now been studying the matter for six weeks.

So we have not been able to determine the nature and volume of INPOLSE's arms exporting business. Several former INPOLSE officials said that the flow of exports was heavy during the 50s and early 60s but tapered off rapidly thereafter when large firearms firms moved into the police export business, attracted by all the government money being thrown around. In recent years, sources said, INPOLSE did almost no export work and restricted itself to its function as a Smith & Wesson dealer, selling police revolvers to the students.

Since much of the school's training business was presumably financed through contracts with the AID Office of Public Safety, we went through AID records to find out how many foreign policemen had been sent there. We located contracts worth $320,889.13, covering about a thousand students. But INPOLSE officials themselves said this represented only a small fraction of the company's work with AID over the years.

After further toil in the bureaucracy, we found an AID clerk who said that many IN-



The International Police Academy, recently abolished by Congress, fed thousands of foreign policeman into INPOLSE's "graduate" training programs.

The Sparring Blow by Blow

This is a portion of our conversation with Dennis Flemming, the last president of International Police Services.

Q. This American from the CIA that we talked to said he came over to your place before he went to Vietnam and took a course in police methods. In the late sixties. He said he was with some other fellows from the CIA.

A. I don't know. He may have that a little screwed up. Did he say us, or did he say International Police Academy.

Q. No. He said International Police Services, on R St.

A. Well, that was our address . . .

Q. That's what got us interested . . .

A. But I don't recall anything like that. We've had people coming in and checking in to see what the hell we do and that sort of thing, but I don't recall any training per se.

Q. Well, in fact we were able to confirm that with one of your instructors.

A. Uh, what instructor?

Q. Well, I wouldn't give your name to somebody else, either. But it was someone who had a long relationship with your company.

A. Well, as I say, we've had people from all kinds of government agencies come over to see what we're doing, but it doesn't ring a bell that we had a group of people from that outfit.

Q. Did you have any connection with the CIA in the business?

A. Not except as a friendly bystander.

Q. I see. Cause, I guess, we have several sources who have said that you were what is known as a CIA proprietary. In other words, that the CIA helped to set you up and was running you during the course of your business.

A. Well, here's the thing. People can say a whole lot of things. And I don't know what their purpose might be in saying them. But I'm talking to a guy I don't know from a bale of hay over the phone. . . .

Q. You don't really want to talk about it then?

A. Look. My position is that I'm just the last boss of a losing cause. We lost some money in that company. It was a bad deal, and I don't feel like talking to anyone about it. You know. I'm a retired cop, and I'm a very private guy.

Q. Where were you a cop? That must have been a long time ago.

A. That's not really important.

Q. I know, but . . .

A. This thing's all history now. I'm unhappy that something I was involved in didn't turn out, but I'm not thinking about it now. I don't even talk about it to my brother. . . .

Not all the former instructors of INPOLSE talked freely with us. This is one example.

Q. I understand that you at one time had a connection with International Police Services, Inc. Is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do, teach courses for them?

A. Yes.

Q. I see. When were you there?

A. Uh. What's this for?

Q. It's for *Harper's Weekly*. We're looking into police training and the export of police equipment.

A. And what's your name again?

Q. Taylor Branch.

Q. And you're with *Harpers*?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't mind my asking a few questions, do you?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Can I ask you why?

A. Well, I just don't like to . . . If you'll write me a letter and put it in writing, I'll, maybe I'll answer it.

Q. Could I come to see you?

A. No, no, it's not necessary. Have you contacted anyone else?

A. Yes, we've been talking with some of the officers.

Q. And who are they?

A. Oh, Mr. McKinney and Duane and several of the others. Uh, you worked for them after you retired from the FBI?

A. Yes.

Q. What kind of course were you teaching?

A. Uh, what's your number, and maybe I'll call you back.

Q. Uh. (gives numbers)

A. All right. I might give you a call. (hangs up.)

A portion of a conversation with an ex-instructor from INPOLSE.

Q. Were you training Americans over there, too?

A. No. All foreigners, Latin America, Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, just about everywhere.

Q. I see. But that's how we got interested in the story in the first place. We talked to an American who had been with the CIA, who said that he had been trained at International Police before he went to Vietnam. Would you know anything about that?

A. Let's see. Oh, yeah. You're right. But I wasn't engaged in it, myself. That's right. We had a fellow from the Philippines who taught them counterinsurgency and that sort of thing. You're right. They had a group over there from CIA.

Q. I see. Just that one fellow from the Philippines.

A. That's right. Who are you, again? . . .

Q. Was there just that one course for the fellows from the Agency?

A. I can't recall. I know there was at least that one group. There might have been two or more, but I really don't know . . .

Q. Did the Americans mix with the foreigners, or did they keep them separate?

A. No, as I recall, we had the Americans in between the foreign classes.

A. I see. So they didn't overlap.

A. No, that's right.

Q. Did the Americans have some of the same instructors?

A. Yes. They did have some of the same.

Q. I see. What kind of counter-insurgency were they teaching?

A. Oh, I don't know that. That wasn't my cup of tea, so I never got into that.

Q. What did you teach?

A. I gave a course on surveillance, informants, that sort of thing. Regular police work.

POLSE records were "missing" from the files. For example, all the financial records of a major, worldwide contract during the Vietnam era were not there. The contract covered the years 1963-70. Obviously, the AID records are hopelessly incomplete, and another Freedom of Information request for the remaining contracts has been pending since early December.

Even if the AID contracts turn up, they will not tell the full story of INPOLSE's activities. According to a former officer of the company, AID was often bypassed altogether in contracts directly between INPOLSE and foreign governments and police departments. These relationships have proved impossible to enumerate thus far, as have the relationships between INPOLSE and *American* agents receiving special training. All former INPOLSE officers have vigorously denied that the company ever trained Americans, but one ex-CIA operative said that he himself took a counter-insurgency course there in the late 60s' before going to Vietnam for operations that included working closely with the Vietnamese police in the Phoenix program.

A former instructor at INPOLSE confirmed the fact that Americans had been trained there, recalling "at least one" group of agents under the tutelage of a guerilla expert from the Philippines, Napoleon Valeriano. We have established that INPOLSE used the services of Valeriano, who distinguished himself in CIA agent Edward Lansdale's campaign against the Huk rebellion in the Philippines during the fifties. Lansdale became legendary as "The Ugly American," and Valeriano later seemed to turn up wherever there were concentrations of jungle, insurgents, and CIA agents. He helped train the CIA's Cubans for the Bay of Pigs expedition, and subsequently helped train counterinsurgents for Vietnam.

The former officers of INPOLSE denied that the firm had connections with the CIA at all. Frank Holmes, its first president, refused even to discuss the matter unless we would tell him which of his former employes had given us our leads. He and the other officers painted the police training experience as a relic from an old era, bygone and uninteresting.

To some extent they are right. INPOLSE is recently dead, and the International Police Academy is scheduled to close in February—in accordance with an amendment proposed by Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.) and adopted by Congress. A just-retired high-ranking CIA official, with direct knowledge of police training matters, said that IPA had been "turned over to AID . . . that is, *really* turned over" by the Agency in the last couple of years, anyway.

The era of large, Washington-based, CIA-sponsored training schools for foreign policemen is ending after a run of many years. But this does not mean that the Agency is now without methods to penetrate and train the police and security establishments of foreign countries, or without the means to recruit foreign officials for use in American intelligence programs and covert operations.

The new law contains two loopholes large enough to fly a U-2 through. One, for which CIA Director Colby personally lobbied, allows the CIA itself to continue training foreign police. (Colby assured the Congressmen that it would not be done too much.) The other loophole exempts programs for training foreign officials in narcotics control. Already the word is out in Washington that significant numbers of CIA operatives are moving over to the Drug Enforcement Administration, following the bureaucratic winds. And no one knows when we will find out which of the CIA's other proprietaries—there are hundreds in this country—is carrying on the INPOLSE tradition.

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